



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## DOCUMENTS

### *I. A Letter of Jefferson on the Political Parties, 1798.*

TO THE EDITOR :

THE following letter, by Thomas Jefferson, now for the first time published, was written seven weeks after President Adams proclaimed the adoption of the Eleventh Amendment and about three months before the passage of the Alien and Sedition Laws. Jefferson was at this time busily organizing the Democratic-Republican Party, as hinted in the reference in the letter to the conversations he held with his friends at Francis's Union Hotel—a noted public house, located at No. 13 South Fourth Street, Philadelphia. It was known as the Indian Queen before the Revolution. It was the scene of many famous dinners, and from its steps Washington bowed his farewell to the people, when, after Adams's inauguration, he accompanied the President, followed by a great throng, and left him at this hotel, where he was to lodge.

The letter contains one of the earliest descriptions of American political parties—at least by Jefferson—that has yet come to light. It suggests why Virginia was selected as the field for the operations of the new party, and contains probably the first draft of the now famous sentence in Jefferson's first inaugural, "We are all Republicans ; we are all Federalists." The MS. belongs to Maj. Wm. H. Loyd, of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, who kindly put it into my hands some years ago, and with his consent I make it public.

FRANCIS N. THORPE.

PHILADELPHIA February 12. 1798.

*Sir*

I have duly received yours of the 28th Ult<sup>o</sup> mentioning that it had been communicated to you, that in a conversation in Francis's Hotel (where I lodge) I had spoken of you as of Tory politics ; and you make inquiry as to the fact and the "idea to be conveyed." I shall answer you with frankness. It is now well understood that two political Sects have arisen within the U. S. the one believing that the executive is the branch of our government which the most needs support ; the other that like the analogous branch in the English Government, it is already too strong for the republican parts of the constitution ; and therefore in equivocal cases they incline to the legislative powers : the former of these are called federalists, sometimes aristocrats or monocrats, and sometimes tories, after the corresponding sect in the English Government of exactly the same definition : the latter are stiled republicans, whigs, jacobins, anarchists, disorganizers &C. these terms are in familiar use with most persons, and which of those of the first class, I used on the occasion alluded to, I do

not particularly remember ; they are all well understood to designate persons who are for strengthening the executive rather than the legislative branches of the Government ; but probably I used the last of those terms, and for these reasons : both parties claim to be federalists and republicans, and I believe with truth as to the great mass of them ; these appellations therefore designate neither exclusively, and all the others are slanders, except those of whig and tory which alone characterise the distinguishing principles of the two Sects as I have before explained them ; as they have been known and named in England for more than a century and as they are growing into daily use here with those, whose respect for the right of private Judgment in others, as well as themselves, does not permit them to use the other terms which either imply against themselves or charge others injuriously.

I remark with real Sensibility the Sentiments of esteem you are pleased to express for my character, and do not suffer myself to believe they will be lessened by any difference which may happen to exist in our political opinions, if any there be : the most upright and conscientious characters are on both Sides of the question : and as to myself, I can say with truth, that political tenets have never taken away my esteem for a moral and good man : on this head I have never uttered a word nor entertained a thought to your prejudice : and even as to politics I could say nothing of my own knowledge as you must be sensible ; but only from the Information of others, having understood on different occasions, that on public questions you have generally concurred with those who were on the Side of executive powers : if in this I have been misinformed, I shall with pleasure correct the error, if otherwise, your conviction of the Solidity of your opinions, will render it satisfactory to you that they have not been mistaken : this is the Sentiment which each side entertains of its own opinions and neither thinks them the Subject of Imputation. I am really sorry that any one should have found gratification in paining you or myself by such a communication ; the circumstance took place in a familiar conversation with gentlemen, who with myself mess together every day at our lodgings, and was therefore the less guarded ; and I do not recollect that there was a person present but of our ordinary Society ; the occasion too was as clear of exception, being used in proof how little of party Spirit there is in Virginia, and how little it influences public proceedings there, and so transient withal, that I dare say it has not been since thought of nor repeated, to any other person than yourself, with what view is not for me to consider.

I have thought I owed to your private and public character this candid declaration, and I have no fear you will mistake the motives which lead to it.

I have the honor to be with great Respect

Sir

your most obedient Servant

The Honbl<sup>e</sup> Mr Wise<sup>1</sup>

TH : JEFFERSON.

<sup>1</sup> This was probably John Wise, of Virginia.